20th Century Studios Presents
An Ethea Entertainment Production

SWIPED

PRODUCTION NOTES

KEY INFORMATION AND CREDITS

Directed by: Rachel Lee Goldenberg
Written by: Bill Parker & Rachel Lee Goldenberg and Kim Caramele
Produced by: Jennifer Gibgot, p.g.a.; Andrew Panay, p.g.a.; Lily James
Executive producers: Robert J. Dohrmann, Gala Gordon, Kim Caramele
Director of Photography: Doug Emmett
Production Designer: Hillary Gurtler
Editor: Julia Wong, ACE
Music Supervisor: Andrea von Foerster
Music by: Chanda Dancy
Costume Designer: Beth Morgan
Casting by: Rich Delia, CSA

Cast: Lily James (Whitney), Jackson White (Justin), Myha'la (Tisha), Ben Schnetzer (Sean) and Dan Stevens (Andrey), Pierson Fodé (Michael), Clea DuVall (Charlotte), Pedro Correa (Diego), Ian Colletti (JB), Coral Peña (Marta)

Release Date: Streaming exclusively on Hulu September 19, 2025

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SYNOPSIS

Inspired by the provocative story of the visionary founder of online dating platform Bumble, 20th Century Studios' new feature film "Swiped" introduces recent college grad Whitney Wolfe as she uses extraordinary grit and ingenuity to break into the male-dominated tech industry, launching an innovative, globally lauded dating app—two, actually—and pave the way to becoming the youngest female self-made billionaire.

A Q&A WITH WRITER-DIRECTOR RACHEL LEE GOLDENBERG

It's a privilege to tell this story and I spent five years working to make this film because of how deeply it resonated with me. I was, of course, aware of Tinder and Bumble, but didn't know about Whitney until producer Jen Gibgot approached me with "Swiped." I was immediately invigorated by this wild journey, and the brilliant, resilient woman at its center. Whitney did the impossible, creating a top app—twice! She's unapologetically ambitious. Her tenacity and grit have aided her in achieving a level of success in tech, in business, that few women have. And she's done it while coming from a place of honesty and vulnerability, admitting to mistakes along the way.

The scope and scale of her journey is massive—enormous wins, devastating losses, billions of dollars at stake. But in her experience, I saw echoes of my own, and ways to explore cultural issues I've been captivated by for a long time. Like Whitney, I set out to succeed in a competitive, male-dominated field. As one of the few women in any given space, it was a challenge to navigate how to behave, what to let slide, when to push back. I can identify different moments where I've been, to varying degrees, the victim, the hero, the villain. I've reflected a lot on my early experiences; both things that happened to me and my own behavior. The tension between feeling both victimized and complicit. The fact that wanting to succeed and doing what's right often felt at odds. Exploring questions like, is being successful as a person from a marginalized group a win in and of itself, or is that validating a broken system, when maybe we should just burn it all down and build a better one? Life experience is an essential part of creating a moral framework for oneself. It's aspirational, and frankly cinematic, how Whitney took the toughest moments in her life and reworked them into her superpower.

What are some of the themes of the film?
The central theme of "Swiped" is how the choices of individuals shape culture. The individual benefits and cultural downsides to maintaining the status quo. The film explores culpability, accountability, and all the complexities of working within a broken system.

Another element I wanted to highlight is the deep effects of toxic behavior. Whitney's accounts of her experience are harrowing and very painful. I wanted to showcase how profoundly the experience affected not just her work, but her sense of self. I've heard dismissive notions about toxic behavior, that one could just "brush it off and move on." I sought to make the experience as visceral as possible, to counteract that narrative. I also wanted to showcase the ways in which toxic behavior is normalized—how the industry and the media were quick to jump on board with a very misogynistic reading of the situation.

Whitney hasn't been able to speak directly about her experience due to an NDA that's currently in place. So, how did you and your writing partner, Bill Parker, approach your adaptation of this story? What did the research process look like?
We took the responsibility of telling this story very seriously. It was essential that we told this story with integrity and approached it as thoughtfully and honestly as we could. We couldn't speak with Whitney, but there was a lot of material that was publicly available. Crucially, we read Whitney's lawsuit, as well as countless interviews with her and everyone else involved. To get a

broader sense of the industry and culture, we also steeped ourselves in the 2010's tech world, researching articles from the era and books like *Brotopia* by Emily Change and *The Code* by Margaret O'Mara.

Can you talk about the arc of this film?
Yes! The big picture in the simplest, least-spoilery terms. We meet Whitney as an enthusiastic, somewhat naïve, recent college grad. Employing her inherent brilliance and tenacity, she initially finds success by working within the flawed, misogynistic tech culture. And then through her journey, both mistakes she makes and awful things she experiences, she comes out the other side inspired to do things differently.

What was your approach to this film, tonally, visually?
For me, setting the tone starts with the script. Much of the energy of the film and the feel of different scenes are infused into the bones of the script Bill Parker and I wrote, articulated through the writing style. The key word was propulsion. This journey is an absolute whirlwind, from Whitney working her way into an exciting new job, to propelling that company to massive success, to losing it all… whether she's the engine that's thrusting the story forward, or being dragged through it against her will, momentum is a key element.

There is a shift in tone throughout the film. Our guiding light for this journey was Whitney's story. I wanted her experience to feel visceral. Toward the beginning, when she's optimistic and exhilarated, we're in a more joyful, comedic place tonally—the world is full of possibility. Then as things get more complicated for Whitney, the tone slowly shifts darker, getting downright brutal in moments. From Lily's performance to the cinematography and design, to the wardrobe, music, cutting patterns, sound design, etc.—we worked together to brings the audience along on Whitney's emotional journey.

Additionally, there was also a desire to balance authenticity and scope; this is something cinematographer Doug Emmett and I discussed at length. When I say authenticity—Whitney's journey needed to feel personal, visceral. So, we strived to create intimacy, to ensure it didn't feel overly shiny; instead creating a tactile, imperfect feel. But on the other side of the coin—an epic, exciting scope was essential to tell this story. The audience needs to feel this exhilaration, the explosion as Tinder rises—there's a larger-than-life quality to that kind of success. The company starts as an underdog and becomes a massive, industry-defining triumph. The parties, the travel, the crowds—all had to feel in line with that level of tremendous growth. Navigating the tension between those two elements created our film's specific feel.

Speaking of Lily James, what was it like working with her, both as an actor and a producer?
It was a gift to have Lily as my partner on this film. We share a passion, a bit of an obsession, for the work, and connected over our love for this story. She's one of the hardest working people I've met. We worked closely from the script phase all the way through post. Beat by beat, scene by scene, we collaborated to make this film.

Lily brought such care, such dedication, such craftsmanship to this role. Her process is deep and vigorous, and she holds herself to an incredibly high standard. She had an intensive research process to recreate Whitney's mannerisms, including studying every interview Whitney's ever done. She also shadowed a tech executive to feel the energy of that world and bring an added layer of authenticity to the role.

All this care and effort is on display in her gorgeous performance. Lily did an incredible job of tracking Whitney's growth through the film. It's a challenge—the journey takes Whitney from a buoyant recent college grad to a seasoned 30-year-old tech mogul. You can see Lily's physicality change throughout the film, she literally becomes more poised and mature, while maintaining the essence of the character. It gives the film a depth, this wonderful lived-in quality.

You directed an incredible supporting cast in this film, as well. Let's start with Jackson White, what was it like working with him?
I could not be prouder of the ensemble we put together. To a person, every single actor brought more to their character than what was on the page. There was also a communal bonding and commitment to the story that ran through the entire cast. It's especially visible in larger group scenes, like the conference rooms, where each person is bringing life, depth, a kinetic vibrance to the world by making it their own.

To talk about Jackson specifically; he brings an electric, raw energy to his performance. He's exciting to collaborate with because there's a discovery process there; he'll try completely different things take to take, so each moment crackles with freshness, vitality. Jackson brought an authenticity to this really challenging role, he was able to find his way in—in the wrong hands that character could feel one dimensional, but he crafted a nuanced, unpredictable version.

What was it like working with Ben Schnetzer and what does he bring to the role of Sean?
I am a Ben Schnetzer super fan! He takes the work incredibly seriously. He breaks down the scenes beat by beat, building an incredibly precise performance—but he makes it look effortless and natural. An example of his dedication-- as part of his personal prep, he would create a line or two of dialogue to get into character at the top of a take—and the lines were so convincing they often fooled our editor into thinking they were part of the script!

What made Myha'la the perfect choice for the fictional character of Tisha?
Myha'la is a joy to work with, and one of the most natural actors I've ever had the pleasure to direct. She has an ease to her performance. Whatever you throw at her—a joke, a necessary piece of exposition—she can ground it and find her character within it. Since she plays a fictional character she created the depth out of whole cloth, but feels just as layered and specific as the others.

What was it like working with Dan Stevens and what made him the perfect person to portray Andrey Andreev?
Simply put, Dan Stevens is magic in this role. I knew he'd be incredible, but he exceeded all my expectations. He jumped in with both feet— working to find a look that mimicked Andrey's hair

style and eye color, employing an effortlessly perfect Russian accent. He disappears into the role and brings this quirky, twinkle-in-his-eye energy to Andrey that is beyond delightful and exactly what's needed from that character.

How did you approach the period costumes?
This was my second collaboration with costume designer, Beth Morgan. Previously we did *Minx* which takes place in the 1970s. I thought compared to that, this "period" look would be relatively similar to today. Wrong! [*Laughs.*] It was shocking to review our own photos from 2012 and realize how awful so much of it was! Fashion has changed dramatically. So, the challenge was to find clothing that first and foremost told our story, suited our characters—but then ensuring period accuracy without styling that's completely revolting. [*Laughs.*] But luckily Beth is a genius, and an amazing storyteller. She crafted an incredibly specific, emotional costume journey for Whitney (with essential input from Lily!), and brought the rest of the cast's looks to life with just as much care.

Tell us about recreating the Tinder and Bumble offices for the film.
The look and design of the Tinder and Bumble offices was the result of a deep collaboration with location manager, Kristi Frankenheimer, and production designer, Hillary Gurtler. I was more interested in telling the emotional story than the literal one, so the offices aren't designed as replicas of the real things. While we took inspiration from photos of the real offices, Hillary also drew from a number of other references to curate a hyper-specific look for each space. For example, we start in the eclectic, chaotic Hatch Labs space. But as Tinder grows and moves into new offices, we wanted a more elevated, cohesive space with an eye towards branding. . And things are taking a turn for Whitney, and so the design is more austere, more imposing. Both spaces are playful and masculine, but you can feel the growth from one to the other. Hillary is an incredibly thoughtful designer and was constantly coming up with new ideas to make each location as lived in and specific as possible.

Why tell this story now? What kinds of conversations do you hope it'll spark once the credits start to roll?
The film deals with some complex issues around misogyny, culpability, privilege, Me Too...I expect a variety of interpretations. I hope to spark conversation and debate around these topics. I would also love if someone, even one person, who has experienced toxic behavior feels validated, or seen in some way. For me, the film also serves as a reminder that diversity, equity and inclusion are in fact not words to be scared of but rather an essential part of building any organization. This film serves as a showcase for why companies that put cultural blinders on ultimately suffer from their lack of heterogeneity.

A Q&A WITH PRODUCER AND STAR LILY JAMES

Did you know who Whitney Wolfe was prior to joining this project? What drew you to the role?
Going into this project, I obviously knew of Bumble and Tinder, but I didn't know about Whitney Wolfe. So, I learned everything about Whitney through this experience—her story, her journey, her growth, what she overcame to create a hit app at a time when the whole of the tech world was exploding and everyone was creating apps, and she did it *twice*. Her drive, her light, her passion was one of the most inspiring things for me to explore as an artist.

So, as soon as I learned about her, it was a no-brainer that I wanted to do this project and step into her shoes and try and do her story justice. I think people will be really bowled over learning about the woman behind these apps and what a trailblazer she is and how much she achieved as a female entrepreneur in this male-dominated space.

Tell us about your research process for this role.
It's such a huge responsibility when you portray a real person, and I wanted to make this something that Whitney could watch and be incredibly proud of. That was really my main focus. So the research began with finding everything about her and watching everything she's ever done. I would sit in the living room in front of her masterclass and mimic her hand gestures and manner of speaking and learn it by heart.

I wanted to understand her through not only her achievements but her humanity and her struggles—what she experienced as a woman on a very personal level and bleed all those elements of her together to create a character that feels like the essence of Whitney. It's my own interpretation, of course, but with any character, you're not doing a documentary. I do hope that the essence of who Whitney is embedded into all the choices I made.

Through my research, I was struck by Whitney's force and drive. She has a laser focus. Her brain is going a million miles per hour and she's agile in her thoughts. She's beautifully articulate, witty and has a great sense of humour about who she is and what she's achieved. There's a stillness to her that I do not possess as a human being. So, a lot of the time I'm just trying to be more contained—to have all that energy buzzing through my body, but focusing it.

This is your first time producing a feature film. What was that process like?
I have produced on projects before, however, action and producing on "Swiped" felt particularly meaningful. I never wanted to do this story any other way. As an actor, sometimes you're disenfranchised from the process of a film after you've made it. You've done your job during filming and that's it. But with this, there was no way I wasn't producing it. I wanted to have my say. I wanted to be heard. This is a story about a woman who achieved greatness at a very young age, so I felt like I had to step into her shoes and take on this role and try and embody some of who she is. For me to have a voice in this was incredibly important. It was a really inspiring and collaborative journey that was very enriching.

Over the years, we've seen a number of founder stories. What do you think makes this one so unique?

I think what makes this story so unique is that it's triumphant. We are representing a woman who broke ground to change the game. She monumentally shifted how men and women interact on dating apps. She empowered women to make the first move and created a space where zero online harassment was tolerated. This is a story where we can celebrate a legacy and honor it. In celebrating that success, we will hopefully in turn galvanize generations to break boundaries in whatever workspace they contribute to. The power of storytelling to inspire others is so great I have really high hopes for that. I hope this film is an amazing viewing experience—that it's fun and bold and exciting. But in the end I hope that it inspires women to become entrepreneurs. I think Whitney's story had that effect on me personally, particularly because making this film coincided with the beginning of my production company, Parados Productions. So I'm hopeful that it has that impact on others.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES FACTS ABOUT THE MAKING OF "SWIPED"

- Producer Jennifer Gibgot first became interested in the story of how Bumble originated after meeting her boyfriend on the app. Once she did a deep dive into Whitney Wolfe, she immediately became hooked on the idea of bringing the story to screens. "As a producer, I knew immediately that this was an amazing story. I went down this wormhole of learning about Whitney and created a file and kept going back to it. I lit a fire under the project, found our team and pitched it."

- Lily James and her now producing partner Gala Gordon first met while they were students at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. (Coincidentally, Ben Schnetzer also attended the same school.) "Swiped" marks the pair's first film together as producers. Says Gordon: "In Lily, I've got a business partner who matches my work ethic and sheer determination. We have a common language and mutual respect. We are each other's safety net. It's been life-defining to have that backbone of support."

- "Swiped" also marks a reunion between "Downton Abbey" costars Lily James and Dan Stevens. "I hadn't seen Dan since the 'Downton Abbey' days," recalls James, who reached out to Stevens personally to pitch the role of Andrey Andreev to him. "I think the first scene we ever shot together was when my character, Lady Rose, was in a nightclub in London, and Dan had to drag me out by my curly wig. So it was very surreal to be back together!"

- Myha'la learned how to play the drums for her character Tisha, who moonlights as a musician in a band. "Myhal'a made it look so easy," says director Rachel Lee Goldenberg. "Everyone on set assumed she already knew how to play."
- Production Designer Hillary Gurtler didn't want to feel too beholden to recreating the actual spaces of Hatch Labs, Tinder, or Bumble. Instead, she used the spaces to showcase an evolution of identity. According to Gurtler, "When we were designing Hatch Labs, we looked at a lot of former tech incubator spaces, but I wanted to give the set a sense of impermanence. There are layers of different things and no one true sense of

identity. Then when we go to Tinder, the team has graduated to focusing and dedicating everything to Tinder, and while we weren't plastering the walls with the actual logo itself, you get the sense that you never forget where you are. Then when we get to Bumble, we really wanted it to feel like Whitney had come home and had come into herself. The space is a beautiful embodiment of what Bumble stands for, a female first kind of approach. It's flowing and welcoming and homey."

- Costume designer Beth Morgan similarly focused on Whitney's evolution through her clothes. Morgan considered not only what it was like to go from being a broke 23-yearold to a CEO, but also how being a woman in a male-driven world in 2012 affected the way they'd dress. "One thing I learned about women in tech, or any male-dominated industry, is that expressing yourself through fashion is considered a feminine thing to care about, and it can be looked down on. So, there is a trajectory of women in tech that shows that as soon they become successful, they adopt a real fuck you attitude about their clothes. [*Laughs.*] It was fun to play with what happens when Whitney's not only free but also rich. You really see her go from being broke in your 20s and dressing for men, to being rich and empowered and secure in yourself."

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